



We Live with Dhamma

Series Number 5

BHIKKHUNĪ-SĀSANA IN THERAVĀDA TRADITION



Maha Pajapati Gotami requesting for permission from the Buddha to establish the Order of Nuns (Bhikkhunī Sāsana)

Sayadaw Dr. Nandamālābhivaṃsa

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Introduction

The question on the validity of revival of *Theravāda* Bhikkhunī has been asked by many Theravāda Buddhists as well as Mahāyāna Buddhists. Why is the revival of *Theravāda* bhikkhunī order controversial in the world? Is it possible or not? When the first bhikkhunī ordination ceremony was held in the year 1988 in India, the next question followed: Is it valid or not?

There are many viewpoints regarding this controversial topic. Many people are aware that Myanmar monks do not accept this revival of *Theravāda* Bhikkhunī order at all. What are the main reasons for this? For this, this book is published to give some answers to these questions. A few years ago, Sayadaw Dr. Nandamālābhivamsa, the Rector of International *Theravāda* Buddhist Missionary University who is a very knowledgeable senior monk and also well-known for his Dhamma talks that are packed with much valued information, gave a Dhamma talk regarding this topic. In his Dhamma talk, he gave a few reasons to clear out many uncertainties and doubts.

Thus, the publication of this Dhamma talk in book form would enable many people to gain clear knowledge regarding this *Theravāda* Bhikkhunī *sāsana* in the Lord Buddha's time, its background story, various types of bhikkhunī ordination including *Garudhamma*, the achievements of bhikkhunis and the duration of *sāsana*. Finally, the question regarding revival of *Theravāda*

Bhikkhunī from the viewpoint of Myanmar monks is addressed and discussed widely in this book.

The publication of this book is the birthday gift to our most respectable **Rector Sayadaw Dr. Nandamālābhivamsa** on the occasion of his **75th birthday** (Diamond anniversary, 4th Mac 2015). This project is approved by himself and is printed with his permission as a part of education program under his Institute of Dhamma Education (IDE), Pyin Oo Lwin, Myanmar.

May all rejoice in this *Dhammadāna*! *Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!*

Editor

28th January 2015

Biography of Sayadaw Dr. Nandamālābhivamsa

Sayadaw Dr. Nandamālābhivamsa, born in Myanmar (Burma) in 1940, was educated in Mandalay. At the age of 16 he already passed *Dhammācariya* (Dhamma teacher) and when he was 21, the most difficult *Abhivamsa* examination. He also studied in Sri Lanka at the Kelaniya University in Colombo for M.A. degree and obtained his Ph. D. degree from India.

Because of his excellent knowledge of Buddhist scriptures and his teaching experience, he was rewarded with many high distinctions and titles such as *Aggamahāganthavācakapaṇḍita* and *Aggamahāpaṇḍita*.

Below is his profile:

- Rector of International *Theravāda* Buddhist Missionary University (ITBMU)
- Rector of *Sītagū* International Buddhist Academy (Sagaing Hill)
- Rector of International Institute of *Abhidhamma* (Yangon)
- *Padhāna-Nāyaka* of *Mahāsubhodhārāma* Institute (Sagaing)
- *Padhāna-Nāyaka* of *Sadhammajotaka Subhodhārāma* Institute (Monywa)

He is the chief abbot for the traditional, well-reputed study-monastery “Mahāsubhodayon” (Mahāsubhodhārāma Institute) in Sagaing Hills. He is the founder and leader of Dhammavijjālaya, Centre for Buddhist Studies (CBC) in Sagaing, which is connected to Mahāsubhodayon Monastery and serves foreigners for further studies and practice. He also opened a new Buddhist learning centre called Dhammasahāya Sāsana Centre (IDE Institute of *Dhamma* Education) in Pyin Oo Lwin (May Myo).

He is the Rector of the International *Theravāda* Buddhist Missionary University, which offers a chance for foreigners and Myanmar people to study Buddhism from Diploma up to Ph. D. level in English language.

The teaching method of Sayadaw Dr. Nandamālābhivamsa is very individual, lively, practical and practicable with many examples and references from daily life, and also from the treatises and commentaries of *Suttanta* and *Abhidhamma*. Sayadaw teaches in English and with a lot of humor and loving-kindness (*mettā*).

Sayadaw Dr. Nandamāla is the author of the following books written in Myanmar, Pāli and English languages:

- The Biography of the Master (1970)
- The Life and Literature of Shwehintha Sayadaw (1979)
- The 90 Years of Life of Daw Malayee (1975)

- The Hundred Verses on the Life of the Master (1970)
- The Hundred Verses on the Life of the Thera (1985)
- The Exposition of True Meaning (Paramattha dīpanī) with Critical Introduction to the Text (Thesis for the degree of Master of Philosophy)
- Buddhism and Vegetarianism (1990)
- The Three Meritorious Actions in Buddhism (1992)
- Mettā (1994)
- The Fundamental Abhidhamma (including a chapter on the History of Abhidhamma) (1997)
- A Study of Jainism according to Buddhist Literature (Thesis for the degree of PhD., 2001)
- Paṭṭhan Myat Desana (Discourse on Paṭṭhāna, 2004)
- 13. The Dhamma mirror (2004)
- Perspective of Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (2006)
- Akusala, the Nature of Poison (2010)
- The Buddha's Advice to Rāhula and Rāhula's Life (2012)
- Eight In One (2013)
- The Exits of Mind (2013)
- Samatha and Vipassanā (2013)
- An Analysis of Feeling (*Vedanā*) (2013)

and many of his Burmese Dhamma talks were transcribed and published in book form.

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Four Types of Audience

In this Dhamma talk I like to explain the *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* for your knowledge. There are four types of audiences (*parisā*) in the dispensation of every Buddha:

- 1) *Bhikkhu-parisā* (the audience of ordained monks)
- 2.) *Bhikkhunī-parisā* (the audience of fully ordained nuns)
- 3.) *Upāsaka-parisā* (audience of male lay devotees),
- 4.) *Upāsikā-parisā* (audience of female lay devotees).

The very first *parisā* to appear in the world during the dispensation of Lord Buddha Gotama was *Upāsaka-parisā* (the audience of the male devotees) and this was followed by *upāsikā-parisā* (the audience of the female devotees).

The devotees who were the first to take refuge in the Buddha were two brothers Tapussa and Ballika and they became the very first *Upāsaka-parisā* in the world. At that time, there were only Two Gems in the world i.e. the Buddha and the Dhamma as the *Saṅgha* (community) had not appeared yet. That is why they could take refuge only in Two Gems by saying “*Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.*” (“I go to the Buddha for the refuge, I go to the Dhamma for the refuge.”)

Then, *Upāsikā-parisā*, the audience of female lay devotees appeared in the world. After hearing the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, the Discourse on Turning the Wheel of Dhamma, the eldest one among the five ascetics

(*Pañcavaggiya*), Koṇḍañña, requested for ordination and became a bhikkhu. Then his four companions also became bhikkhus. Later the richman's son Yasa, his four companions and then his other 50 friends also entered into the Buddha's dispensation as bhikkhus. This was how the *Bhikkhu-parisā* came to existence in the world.

During the initial time when the Buddha appeared in the world, there were only *Bhikkhu-parisā*, *Upāsaka-parisā* and *Upāsika-parisā*. The *Bhikkhunī-parisā* did not appear yet, but it came to existence five years after the appearance of the Buddha in the world. It was the last *parisā* or audience to appear in the world. Therefore, there was no *Bhikkhunī-parisā* at the initial period of *Buddha Sāsana*, dispensation of the Lord Buddha.

King Suddhodana

Once the Lord Buddha came to Kapilavatthu because his royal father King Suddhodana was unwell and he also wanted to listen to Dhamma. This king was old at that time. When he met the Lord Buddha, he listened to the Dhamma and as a result of that, he attained stages of enlightenment from *Sotāpatti* (Stream-enterer), *Sakadāgāmī* (Once-returner) to *Anāgāmī* (Non-returner). Finally he attained the highest stage of enlightenment and became an Arahant. At that time, he was still a King and while wearing the king's outfit, he became Arahant. It was a natural law that his final passing away (*parinibbāna*) was on that very day.

This natural law was clarified in the commentaries as such: The inferiority of worldly appearance and form could not bear the noblest virtues of an Arahant. He had to become a bhikkhu immediately if he had some remaining life-span. If not, he would pass away as there was no more life-span for him. So King Suddhodana, being still a king, attained final passing away, *parinibbāna*, when sitting in the royal throne with a white umbrella above him in Kapilavatthu city because he had no more remaining life-span. At that time the Lord Buddha was dwelling in Nigrodhārāma.

Let's have a look at the family background of King Suddhodana. King Suddhodana had two chief queens who were sisters, Queen Māya Devī and Queen Pajāpatī Gotamī. Queen Māya Devī was the mother of Lord Buddha Gotama. Unfortunately, she passed away seven days later after giving birth to Prince Siddhattha. As a result, Queen Pajāpatī Gotamī had to take care of the young prince. Her relationship to him was *mātucchā*. In fact, she was his maternal aunt as well as step-mother (another wife of the father). The *Pāḷi* word *Mātucchā* means the mother's sister or auntie.

Both King Suddhodana and she were old at that time. When King Suddhodana attained *parinibbāna* as an arahant, she was left as a widow. As a natural behavior for a worldly in the world, she was very attached and depended on Lord Buddha, whom she had brought up like her own son and also he was her own nephew. Actually in the palace, she had two children of her own, Prince Nanda and Princess Janapadakalyāṇī whose real name was Rūpanandā. Prince

Nanda was born a few days after Prince Siddhattha was born but she entrusted her own son to the nurses and took care and breastfed Prince Siddhattha.

When Prince Siddhattha became Lord Buddha, she made robes herself and went to offer them for Him to wear. Because she took care of him when he was just seven days old, she was also his foster mother. That's why, she loved him a lot because he was a motherless child. In reality, she took care of him even much more than of her own children.

Just as Prince Siddhattha depended on her while he was of young age, in the same way at that time when she was old, she loved and depended on her foster son and nephew Prince Siddhattha who had then become Lord Buddha Gotama.

Request of Bhikkhunī Ordination by Queen Pajāpatī Gotamī

Once, Queen Pajāpatī Gotamī went to see the Lord Buddha and requested ordination for women. Because her love and dependence on Him, she thought he would accept her request readily. However Lord Buddha rejected her straightforwardly by saying it was not suitable for womenfolk to enter into *sāsana* (dispensation). That means it was not appropriate for a woman to be ordained as a bhikkhunī. She requested the Lord Buddha, her nephew and foster son, up to three times, and He rejected three times.

Why did the Lord Buddha reject her request for woman ordination? The rationales and reasons were given in the commentaries. The first reason was, if He accepted her request easily, she might not treasure it. It is the human nature not to appreciate, cherish and treasure those possessions and effects that one could acquire effortlessly and without difficulty. For her to cherish, treasure and to respect bhikkhunī ordination seriously, the Lord Buddha did not accept her request readily.

Another reason would be explained here. In the dispensation of other Buddhas, there are four types of audience: *Bhikkhu-parisā*, *bhikkhunī-parisā*, *Upāsaka-parisā*, *upāsikā-parisā*. Actually, all Buddhas have four types of audience but at that time of dispensation of Lord Buddha Gotama, only three types of audience: *Bhikkhu-parisā*, *Upāsaka-parisā* and *Upāsikā-parisā*. There surely must be the *Bhikkhunī-parisā* (audience of bhikkhunī). Then a question might be asked here: why did the Lord Buddha reject ordination of women for *upāsikā-parisā* to exist?

The given reason is as follows. At the time of dispensation of Lord Buddha, the social position of women was low and also human life-span about 100 years was very short. However, the human life-span at the time of Lord Buddha Kakusandha was 40,000 years, Buddha Koṇāgamana 30,000 years while Buddha Kassapa was 20,000 years. Lord Buddha Gotama became enlightened when the human life-span was 100 years only. In fact, this was the shortest life-span where a Buddha could arise.

Starting from 500 years, evil conducts started to appear. The life-span when the Buddha Gotama enlightened was about 100 years, so this life-span was considered to be very short and full of wickedness. The people had wicked minds and evil conducts were abundant. It was at this worst period of time the Lord Buddha appeared. This is called *Kaliyuga*, life-span of distress and this is one among 4 types of lifespan. It is compared a four-legged table with three broken legs and it could only maintained by one leg. How can this table maintain itself? It is slanting, shakable and unstable, so it cannot carry anything. If put anything on table top, all things would fall down because it is lacking of stability. So also, three portions of human truthfulness have been lost and only one portion remaining at this *Kaliyuga* time. Or it is said that one-fourth of the world is of good persons, and other three quarters are of immoral persons.

It is an astonishing fact that a Buddha would appear in the world at this *Kaliyuga* period. Because the world is more filled with wicked persons, the surroundings were very full of dangers for women, that's why the women were not permitted to go forth into the dispensation. This fact formed the second reason.

When the Lord Buddha rejected Queen Pajāpatī Gotamī up to three times, she cried and left the monastery crying non-stop. Later Lord Buddha left Kapilavatthu for Vesāli city. But the Queen did not stop even though the Lord Buddha had rejected her up to three times. She had made a firm resolution to request again because she desired nothing

but Bhikkhunī ordination. At that time, she was familyless since her husband King Suddhodana had passed away and Prince Nanda had become bhikkhu. There were 500 Sakyan ladies who were having of a similar predicament because their husbands all had become bhikkhus. They were those bhikkhus mentioned in the Discourse of the Great Occasion (*Mahāsamaya-sutta*). The ladies had no husband anymore and became independent again. Consequently they also wanted to become bhikkhunī. These 500 ladies and Queen Pajāpatī Gotamī seriously discussed among themselves and decided to renounce. Then, they helped each other to shave off their hair. With shaven head, donning the patched robes of monks and following the direction of Lord Buddha, they walked all the way to Vesāli.

Out of respect to the Lord Buddha, they did not want to go by chariots, palanquin etc, but they wanted to walk all the way from Kapilavattu to Vesāli. As they were brought up in the royal palaces, the ministers and councils of their country felt their journey would be fraught by difficulty. As they could not thwart the royal ladies from making this journey, Sākiya and Koliya ministers and chieftains therefore made arrangements for food provision, other necessities and also the persons who prepared meals followed them behind. At suitable resting places, the servants set up resting camps and provided food for these royal ladies. The Queen and the Sakyan ladies made a strenuous journey because they were brought up in comfort and luxury. They travelled barefoot for the whole journey.

When walking barefoot for many days, blisters started to develop in the soles of their feet and their feet were swelling, thus their journey became more struggling and exhausting. However, since they had set their minds to get bhikkhunī ordination, no matter how tiring the journey was, they tried their very best to reach their destination. At the end of the journey they were thoroughly exhausted and travel-worn. Finally they reached the big forest called Mahāvana, and in the forest was the monastery of the Lord Buddha called Kuṭaghara. They stood at the gateway, did not dare to enter inside but stood crying in groups, feeling thoroughly fatigued

Their bodies were covered with dust, their feet were swollen and their faces looked very tired. In this pitiful state, they waited in groups at the gateway of the monastery. They were seen by Venerable Ānanda.

His heart was filled with sorrow when seeing the pitiful and sorry state of the queen and the Sakyan ladies. He worried because he thought something dreadful had occurred to his family and country. With such thoughts of anxiety, he approached them and asked about the circumstances back at his country. They answered, “No, Venerable sir, because we could not get ordination, we have come here to appeal again.” To placate and soothe their minds, he told them to wait and rest at that place while he would approach Lord Buddha and appeal ordination on their behalf.

He entreated to the Lord Buddha, “Lord Buddha, the Queen Pajāpatī Gotamī with 500 Sakyan ladies have come from Kapilavatthu by foot; and they experienced a strenuous

and tiring journey, their feet are swollen and have blisters. They came to request ordination from you. Please allow womenfolk to go forth into the dispensation.” Lord Buddha said, “Do not request so! I do not allow womenfolk to go forth into the dispensation.” He rejected for three times.

Venerable Ānanda was intelligent, since Venerable Ānanda could not get it in this direct way, he made a request by another approach. “Blessed One, if the women go forth in this dispensation, can they obtain *Sotāpatti-phala* (stream-enterer fruition), *Sakadāgāmi-phala* (Once-returner fruition), *Anāgāmi-phala* (Non-returner fruition) or *Arahatta-phala* (Arahant fruition)?” For such a question, Lord Buddha could not contradict it. When asked if it was possible, he said, “It is possible.” Because He said it was possible, Venerable Ānanda continued to speak. If not, Venerable Ānanda would have not continued to ask anymore.

“Since it is possible, Lord Buddha, please consider that the Queen Pajāpatī Gotamī took care of you and breastfed you after your queen mother had passed away. She is a great benefactor to you. She has the wish and strong determination and she arrives here after walking barefooted to request for ordination. Please allow the womenfolk to go forth in this *sāsana* (dispensation).”

Lord Buddha considered on this request since He could not deny any more. Yes, what Venerable Ānanda said was correct. The queen took care of him when he was very young; and if she becomes a bhikkhunī, she can practice up to the final stage of enlightenment i.e. Arahant. The main wish

and aspiration of Lord Buddha for the final goal of *Brahmacariya* (Noble Living practice) is to become arahant or to obtain *arahatta-phala*, not the other things. (“*Arahattaphalapariyosānaṃ sāsanaṃ*”)

“If a woman can be an arahant, please give ordination to the queen since she is a great benefactor to you.” Venerable Ānanda made a good and moving speech. The Lord Buddha did not deny this fact anymore. Then He gave specific conditions for ordination. “If she can accept the *Garudhamma* and follow them respectfully and strictly, I will give permission for her ordination as bhikkhunī.” The *Garudhamma* means that eight kinds of serious and heavy rules are to be followed in advance of the bhikkhunī ordination. Accepting this *Garudhamma* would be her bhikkhunī ordination. Then, Venerable Ānanda inquired about these eight heavy rules.

In fact, these rules and laws were established in harmony with the era and the surroundings. The law is set up if needed, however it is not the truth. If the law is needed at a certain time, it will be set up; if it is not necessary anymore later, it might be abolished. The time of enlightenment of Lord Buddha was 2500 years ago in India, in that place and time, the *Garudhamma* rules were needed.

Garudhamma

The eight rules called *Garudhamma* are as follows:

No. 1) A nun who has been ordained even for a century must greet respectfully, rise up from her seat, salute with joined palms, do proper homage to a bhikkhu ordained but that day. And this rule is to be honored, respected, revered, venerated, never to be transgressed during her life.

It means a bhikkhunī, even if ordained for 100 years, has to pay respect to a bhikkhu even if he is ordained in this very day. This is according to the custom of India at that time. If she does not follow this rule, problems would surface later. When I was in Sri Lanka from year 1987 to 1991, I met a German woman who said this rule number one of the *Garudhamma* was very unfair and unjust. Of course, she was looking from the side of women. I explained to her as follows: “The rule and law is not absolute truth. If the law is a truth, it should be a truth throughout all times and not subject to change. Actually, this law and order is not a truth, but was created by humans when necessary.”

Let's look back at the situation 2500 years ago in ancient India and not just consider the rule in the present condition now. We have to consider the fact that Lord Buddha was enlightened in the midst of Indian people. If this rule was not enforced, that means a bhikkhunī, being a woman, did not respect a bhikkhu, then people would criticize, condemn and

persecute her. To prevent these kinds of problems, the Lord Buddha created such law and order.

However, there was no difference between bhikkhu and bhikkhunī in terms of Dhamma achievement. The rank of Sāriputta as disciple of greatest wisdom was given to Bhikkhunī Khemā and the rank of Moggallāna as of greatest psychic power was given to Bhikkhunī Uppalavannā by Lord Buddha. These Sāriputta and Moggallāna were actually the chief disciples of Lord Buddha and they sat left and right of Him. Thus, bhikkhunī and bhikkhu are equivalent in terms of Dhamma achievement. However, in terms of human nature and environment, people had to be differentiated into low and high status. Thus, this rule and law, the bhikkhunī must pay respect to a bhikkhu, was created to be harmonious within Indian society at that era.

Although it seems to be unreasonable from the women side, Lord Buddha gave an opportunity for women to become bhikkhunī. It should be known that the *arahatta-phala* of bhikkhu and *arahatta-phala* of bhikkhunī are similar in nature; there is no dissimilarity at all. In conclusion, there should be difference where difference should be made, and no discrimination where difference is not needed.

Then I asked the German woman. “In your country now, does the law set by Hitler in that time still apply now? The law and order of the country has transformed already. It is not suitable at all now.” She then accepted my explanation.

Some people assert this rule number one is made to cause the state of women as inferior. In fact, it is not

fashioned to do so but it is imposed according to the environment at that time. The above was what I explained to the German woman. Many questions had been asked as well as many doubts and problems had surfaced regarding this rule number one that a bhikkhunī must pay respect to a bhikkhu.

No. 2) A nun must not spend the rains in a residence where there are no bhikkhus. And this rule is to be honored, respected, revered, venerated, never to be transgressed during her life.

The second rule is that a bhikkhunī must observe the raining retreat (*vassa*) at the place i.e. village, city etc. where bhikkhus are dwelling. It means bhikkhunis could only dwell near a place where there is a monastery so that they always have a chance to listen to Dhamma from the bhikkhus. The *pariyatti* (learning) and *paṭipatti* (practice) could be acquired and learned from the bhikkhus side because the bhikkhus have learned and mastered the treatises as they had learned five years minimally.

At this era also in Myanmar, the nunneries depend on the monasteries. If the nuns want to learn Dhamma lessons and *Dhammācariya* (Dhamma teacher) lessons, they have to go to monasteries to learn. By associating with and learning from bhikkhus, the nuns could make effort to be skillful in *pariyatti* (learning) and *paṭipatti* (practice). In that ancient time during enlightenment of Lord Buddha, this association was more essential. Thus, Lord Buddha laid down the second rule i.e. a bhikkhunī should not observe her raining retreat at a

place where a bhikkhu does not stay. It means the bhikkhunis should not dwell in a place where there is no monastery nearby. And this rule is to be honored, respected, revered, venerated, never to be transgressed during her life.

No. 3) Every half month a nun should desire two things from the Order of Bhikkhus: the asking as to the date of the Observance (*uposatha*) day, and the coming for the exhortation (*bhikkhunovāda*).

A bhikkhunī should request two things from a bhikkhu. 1.) the date of *uposatha* (observance) and 2.) the date of receiving advice (*ovāda*). So that means, she would continue to receive Dhamma education from monks. Hence, the Lord Buddha laid down such law.

No. 4) After the rains (3-months rainy season retreat) a nun must 'invite' [*pavāraṇā*] before both *Saṅgha* (community) in respect of three matters, namely what was seen, what was heard, what was suspected. And this rule is to be honored, respected, revered, venerated, never to be transgressed during her life.

After the raining retreat, a bhikkhunī can go to other places. Before going, one should invite a bhikkhu for *pavāraṇā* (invitation), meaning a bhikkhunī should do *pavāraṇā* in front of a bhikkhu. This act has a very beneficial purpose. Also bhikkhus invite each other to say out their faults. "I invite you, bhante. If you hear, see, or suspect anything I do wrong, please point out and advise me. Please

say if you have anything to say. This is out of compassion to me.” So also, a bhikkhunī should invite a bhikkhu and also do invitation to each other. And this rule is to be honored, respected, revered, venerated, never to be transgressed during her life

No. 5) A bhikkhunī who has broken any of the serious rules must undergo penance for half a month under both Saṅghas. And this rule is to be honored, respected, revered, venerated, never to be transgressed during her life.

If a bhikkhunī does any big offence, she must observe penance called *mānatta* for 15 days. During that period, she must make amends accordingly. If both sides of *Bhikkhu-saṅgha* and *Bhikkhunī-saṅgha* are satisfied with her, then she is released from her offence. In fact, this *Pāli* word *mānatta* means getting satisfaction from two sides of *Saṅgha*.

No. 6) When, as a probationer, she has trained in the six rules for two years, she should seek higher ordination from both orders.

This rule means that if a woman aspired to be a bhikkhunī, she must observe 6 training rules continuously without breaking any of them for two years. These are observing 5 precepts i.e. non-killing of living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech and also non-eating after lunch. It means a woman cannot become a bhikkhunī instantly. She had to wait and practice for two years.

When I visited Korea, I visited and stayed in Mahāyāna monasteries there. In Myanmar, it is a very easy and uncomplicated process for one to become a novice because he can immediately shave his head, take the novice precepts and become a novice straightaway. However in Korea, a candidate has to undergo training for 4 years in order to become a bhikkhu. This must be followed seriously and strictly. I did not enquire all training rules but I knew that novices must carry out service and go for morning and afternoon chanting. They have to learn their chanting by heart and whenever they see bhikkhus, they have to bow down and fold hands. They will not get any mark if they fail to do so. This is just like in military training at military school, the trainees have to salute their officers when seeing them. Similarly, after the end of 4 years they might not get recommendation from the bhikkhus if their behaviors are unsatisfactory. Thus, this novice training is very strict in Korea. In the same way, a bhikkhunī-aspirant has to practice these 6 trainings continuously without breaking any for the period of two years.

No. 7) A bhikkhu must not be abused or reviled in any way by a nun. And this rule is to be honored, respected, revered, venerated, never to be transgressed during her life.

A bhikkhunī should not scold or verbally abuse a bhikkhu for any reasons. There are ten methods of scolding like scolding regarding caste because caste system existed in

India. For example, if someone is short, a person might abuse him with “Oh Short one!” If someone has slanted eyes, others might make fun by calling him “Slanted eyes!” If someone has a dark skin, one might call him “O black one!” One should not scold others because of any physical appearance.

No. 8) From today, admonition of bhikkhus by bhikkhunīs is forbidden. And this rule is to be honored, respected, revered, venerated, never to be transgressed during her life.

The last one, rule number 8, a bhikkhunī should not advise and admonish a bhikkhu for anything. Only a bhikkhu can admonish a bhikkhunī. At that time, the Indian women were talkative thus this law was to stop the talkative nature in them.

Thus, these eight rules are called *Garudhamma*, which means heavy and serious rules. They are to be observed by a bhikkhunī for her whole life.

Then the Lord Buddha continued his utterance, “If Queen Pajāpatī Gotamī could accept these rules, she could receive permission to be bhikkhunī.” After hearing this, Venerable Ānanda was very pleased and requested permission to inform her. She was waiting at the gateway with anticipation. Normally it is easy to see if the fulfillment of one’s wishes was successful or not. Similarly, by looking at the facial expression of Venerable Ānanda, she knew that he had gotten this permission. Nevertheless the acquisition of

this permission was not easy because her acceptance of the Eight *Garudhamma* was compulsory.

Then, Venerable Ānanda explained the rules one by one to her. If she could accept all eight of them, then she could receive ordination as a bhikkhunī. As for the queen, her mind was firmly set to obtain bhikkhunī ordination, so strong that she did not even desire to dwell in the palace any more. The reasons were the final passing away of her husband King Suddhodana and her strong motherly affection to the Lord Buddha, who was ex-Prince Siddhattha, her nephew and whom she took care of just like her own son. Her immediate family members were not around her any more since her son Prince Nanda was a bhikkhu already and her grandson Prince Rāhula was a novice at that time. That's why she felt miserable as there was no more joy and fun remaining in the palace for her. She still had a daughter princess Janapadakalyāṇī Rūpanandā but she had no wish to stay in the palace and desired to be a bhikkhunī.

Then the queen told Venerable Ānanda. "There is a beautiful girl who had decorated and washed her head. When she receives lotus flowers, she will happily receive them with two hands and put them on her head. So also, I would gladly receive the eight *Garudhamma* and will seriously observe them." Then Venerable Ānanda told Lord Buddha that the Queen would promise to observe all the eight *Garudhamma* without exception. Lord Buddha said "If she can observe eight *Garudhamma*, she could receive bhikkhunī ordination."

So, she obtained bhikkhunī ordination by accepting these eight serious rules called *Garudhamma*.

Confusion Arose

There were still 500 Sakyan ladies, who were also queens of other Sakyan kings. This matter was still remaining. So, Venerable Ānanda continued to address the Lord Buddha. “Blessed One! What to do about the 500 Sakyan ladies?” “Let the bhikkhus ordain them.” At that time, it was performed by taking refuge in the Triple Gems. Just like a bhikkhu takes ordination nowadays, so also the bhikkhunis were ordained in the same way

However, there arose a problem between the bhikkhunis later. The bhikkhunis i.e. those ex-Sakyan ladies told Mahā Pajāpatī Gotamī. “We were ordained in the systematically way, but you were not. You are not a bhikkhunī.” This misunderstanding occurred because of the different methods of their bhikkhunī ordination. Their ordination method is *Ekato-upasampadā*, which means ordained in one side i.e. *Bhikkhu-saṅgha*. However the ordination of Queen Pajāpatī Gotamī was not performed in the similar way and she had no preceptor. When a female candidate wanted to be a bhikkhunī, she was required to have her own preceptor. That’s why those 500 bhikkhunis developed uncertainty and doubt on the status of Pajāpatī Gotamī and were of opinion that she was not a real bhikkhunī.

Then seeking for help, Pajāpatī Gotamī approached Venerable Ānanda. “Venerable Ānanda, those 500 bhikkhunis claim that I am not a bhikkhunī yet!” Venerable Ānanda approached the Lord Buddha for more clarification. “This matter is not like that. Her acceptance of *Garudhamma* forms her Bhikkhunī ordination”.

Thus, there are 3 methods for bhikkhunī ordination:

1.) *Garudhamma-paṭiggahaṇūpasampadā*

By accepting *Garudhamma*, one becomes bhikkhunī. This was the method of ordination for Pajāpatī Gotamī.

2.) *Dūtenupasampadā (Dūtena Upasampadā),*

There was a lady called Aḍḍhakāsi who could not come personally to receive her ordination. Her ordination was received through a messenger.

3.) *Aṭṭhavācikūpasampadā (Aṭṭha-vācika Upasampadā)*

The bhikkhunis that came at the later time were ordained by this third method. They had to be ordained at two sides. At the *Bhikkhunī-saṅgha* side, there are recitations of one *ñatti* and 3 *kammavācās*; and also at the *Bhikkhu-saṅgha* side, there are recitations of one *ñatti* and 3 *kammavācās*. It is double of the form of ordination. There are 2 *Ñatti* and 6 *Kammavācās*, totally there are 8 recitations. Therefore, this method is called *Aṭṭha-vācika upasampadā*.

Ordination for Bhikkhu

In what manners does the Bhikkhu *upasampadā* occur? For Venerable Koṇḍañña, the very first bhikkhu, his ordination method was distinct from the methods for bhikkhu ordination nowadays. When respectfully listening to *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, he obtained *Dhamma-cakkhu* (*Dhamma* eye), meaning he gained *Sotāpatti-magga-phala* (Stream-enterer path and fruition). Then he requested for ordination. Lord Buddha said.

*“Ehi bhikkhu, svākkhāto dhammo,
cara brahmacariyaṃ sammā dukkhassa antakriyāya”*
“Come bhikkhu, well expounded is the Dhamma,
Live the Noble Life for the complete ending of
dukkha.”

At the same time, Lord Buddha gave him some responsibility in the form of *Brahmacariya*, meaning practicing the Noble Eightfold Path. The purpose is *sammā dukkhassa antakriyāya*, for the complete ending of dukkha. This is called *Ehi-bhikkhu-upasampadā* which means the “Acceptance by saying “Come bhikkhu!”. In reality, this was the very first *bhikkhu upasampadā* (bhikkhu ordination) in the world.

Later, there was another ordination form by reciting the formula “*Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*” which means “I go to the Buddha for the refuge, I go to the Dhamma for the refuge, I go to the Community for the refuge”. This form of ordination is called *Tisaranagam’ūpasampadā*,

meaning “Acceptance by Going for Refuge to the Triple Gem.”

Next is the ordination for Venerable Mahā Kassapa. It is called *Ovādapāṭiggahaṇūpasampadā* (*Ovāda-paṭiggahaṇa Upasampadā*) meaning ordination with the Buddha’s admonishment. By accepting the *ovāda* or advice from the Lord Buddha, he received the Bhikkhu ordination.

Another ordination form is called *Pañhābyākaraṇūpasampadā* (*Pañhā-byākaraṇa Upasampadā*). This ordination was given to the seven years novice called Sopāka. This novice gave correct answers to a series of questions asked by Lord Buddha. Just like a student receiving a prize by answering correctly, Lord Buddha gave him bhikkhu ordination.

The above are the various method of ordination for bhikkhus.

Nowadays, the bhikkhu ordination is through the method of *Ñatticatutthūpasampadā* (*Ñatti-cattuttha Upasampadā*). It is ordination with the recitations of one *ñatti* and three *Kammavācās* in a Sīmā hall. In fact, this is the only valid ordination type nowadays.

Bhikkhunī-sāsana

As for women, Queen Pajāpatī Gotamī’s ordination is called *Garudhamma upasampadā*, meaning her ordination took place when she personally accepted these eight kinds of heavy and serious rules, whereas the followers of her, the 500 Sakyan ladies, received the *Ekato-upasampadā* (ordination at

one side). The bhikkhunis that ordained later than these 500 received *Ubhatopasampadā*, meaning ordination at both sides of *Bhikkhunī-saṅgha* and *Bhikkhu-saṅgha*. There are four recitations at the *Bhikkhunī-saṅgha* side and also four recitations at the *Bhikkhu Saṅgha* side. Therefore, totally there are eight recitations in total. After these eight recitations, then one is a bhikkhunī and this ordination method is called *Aṭṭha-vācika-upasampadā*.

Accepting *Garudhamma* ordination was an extraordinary way for Queen Pajāpatī Gotamī to become bhikkhunī. Then her 500 Sakyan ladies also became bhikkhunis. This was the starting point of how the *Bhikkhunī-saṅgha* was established. At that time, various types of persons, i.e. queens, richman's daughters, high caste women, low caste women etc. entered into the *Bhikkhunī-saṅgha*. Thus, this was the forming of the *Bhikkhunī-parisā*.

Before one can be a bhikkhunī, a bhikkhunī-aspirant must be asked 24 questions called *antarayika-dhamma*. These are called *antarayika* because these are obstructing factors for one to become bhikkhunī. As for the monk, there are only 13 questions. If a candidate is free from these 24 obstructing factors, then she would be able to receive bhikkhunī ordination from the *Bhikkhunī-saṅgha* side firstly, after this she will be brought to the *Bhikkhu-saṅgha* side for ordination the second time.

Then they will be told of the date and time of their ordination. Before a newly ordained bhikkhu leaves the *Sīmā* hall, he will be told of the four requisites, because depending

on this, his life can be sustained and continued. These are food, lodging, robes and medicines. As for a bhikkhunī, there are only 3 requisites i.e. food, robes and medicines. For the bhikkhu, lodging means *rukhamūla*-staying under the trees is one of the dependences. But for a bhikkhunī, staying under the tree is not suitable and as a result lodging is not mentioned for her. She should stay in a house or any secured building as her dwelling place.

Achievement of Bhikkhunis and Environment in Ancient India

That's how the *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* grew systematically. Bhikkhunis were the guiding light for the lay ladies. In the dispensation of Lord Buddha, there were many bhikkhunis who were having outstanding qualities and were endowed with wisdom. At that time, people doubted the intelligence of women because they thought women had a lack of wisdom. In fact there were many bhikkhunis who were wise and outstanding.

Take for instance Bhikkhunī Vajirā who was questioned about the origin of *satta* (being). She gave an outstanding answer as follows:

*“Yathā hi aṅgasambhārā, hoti saddo ratho iti,
evam khandhesu santesu, hoti sattoti sammuti.”*

(“Just like the term ‘chariot’ comes to be because of

collection of many parts, in the same way, due to the mass of aggregates, the term ‘being’ comes to be.”)

She used this simile because at that era, horse-chariot, bullock-cart etc. were familiar among the people. In the same way, when the five aggregates are grouped together, the term “satta” or “being” appears.

Up to now, people still use this chariot simile spoken by Bhikkhunī Vajirā as reference in order to illustrate the concept of “satta”. From this point, we could know that there were many clever, outstanding and distinguished bhikkhunis in the dispensation of the Lord Buddha. In fact, there were many bhikkhunis like Bhikkhunī Vājira having extraordinary and special philosophical views and thoughts.

However, there are many strict rules for bhikkhunis to be followed. There is a rule that states a woman cannot become bhikkhunī again if one has disrobed once before. For a bhikkhu, the rule is differed; he could disrobe and be reordained again for many times. But bhikkhunī ordination is limited only once. This is a huge difference for bhikkhunī and bhikkhu. The reason for the strictness of the rules for bhikkhunis was owing to the environment in ancient India time, hence these rules were imposed as necessary.

But Lord Buddha also praised some of those bhikkhunis for their inner qualities because they were of the same level as the chief disciples Venerable Sāriputta and Venerable Moggallāna. Some bhikkhunis were conferred the title of *etadagga* which means having foremost or most outstanding quality. In terms of Dhamma, there is no differentiation into

low or high level. In fact, bhikkhunis could have the same excellent and outstanding qualities as bhikkhus.

As said before, in terms of social aspects, Lord Buddha had to follow the conventional and traditional way in the country of India at that time. He had to make many laws and orders so that they were not against the culture at that time. In spite of many strict rules, the *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* grew in strength and there appeared many bhikkhunis who were very competent in Dhamma preaching. They were respected by many people including kings and were a refuge for devotee. King Pasenadi personally built a nunnery and took refuge in these bhikkhunis. Devotees also greatly supported and offered food and other requisites to the bhikkhunis.

This *Bhikkhuni-sāsana* was very firm and well-established and it even reached Sri Lanka. At the third Buddhist council, Buddhist missionaries were sent to other nine places. A Buddhist missionary led by Venerable Sona and Venerable Uttara came to Suvāṇṇabhūmi (Golden Land) to propagate the Dhamma. Suvāṇṇabhūmi is believed to be a place called Thaton in Myanmar. Another Buddhist missionary led by Venerable Mahinda came to Sri Lanka to propagate the Dhamma. His sister, Bhikkhunī Saṅghamitta, a princess, followed later to propagate Dhamma. It means in Sri Lanka the *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* prospered. It also once prospered in Myanmar country. This *Bhikkhuni-sāsana* lasted for about 1000 years but unfortunately it has ceased at the present time.

The Duration of *Sāsana*

When Lord Buddha permitted the bhikkhunī ordination, he told Venerable Ānanda: “If I would not have consented to women to go forth in my dispensation, my *sāsana* (dispensation) would remain for 1000 years. Because of this reason, the *sāsana* would be reduced by 500 years.” Why? It can be likened to a family in which there are only women and no men. In such a family, thieves and robbers could even light a lamp in the lantern, could enter the house silently and steal easily because they are not afraid of the women. If there is a pest infection to a paddy field, the whole field will perish. So also if the inside of a sugarcane changes to red due to infection of a disease, then the destruction of the sugarcane field would occur soon.

In the same way, when women enter into the dispensation of Lord Buddha called *sāsana*, this kind of incident would occur. Just like putting up blockage to prevent water from flowing in as an earlier prevention, in the same way the establishment of *Garudhamma* in advance would let the *sāsana* (dispensation) to endure for 1000 years.

However, nowadays it is widely believed that the *sāsana* might endure for 5000 years. What is the disparity between these duration of *sāsana* 5000 years and *sāsana* 1000 years? It is explained in the commentaries (*aṭṭhakathā*) that the *sāsana* in fullest, purest pristine and with the highest quality will only last for 1000 years. This is defined as the era of *Patisambhidā* where the arahants who have noblest quality can be found. In the next 1000 years only *Sukkha-vipassakā* arahants (Dry-

insight arahants) who do not have psychic powers could be found. Next is the era of *Anāgāmi* (non-returner), where only non-returners could be found. Then, the following 1000 years is the era of *Sakadāgāmi* (once-returner), and the last 1000 years is the era of *Sotāpanna* (stream-enterer). Thus, this total of 5000 years is defined as the duration of the *sāsana* (dispensation).

It could be widely believed that the *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* could endure to 1000 years. Now is over 2500 years of the *sāsana*. No one can give the exact date and the exact time of the disappearance of the *Bhikkhunī-sāsana*.

Questions and Problems Regarding *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* at Modern Time

However, in many countries except Myanmar, the revival of *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* takes place nowadays. Myanmar Sayadaws (senior monks) who follow strictly the treatises of *Pāli* (original text), *aṭṭhakathā* (commentaries) and *ṭīkā* (sub-commentaries) do not accept this new *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* because bhikkhunī ordination is not possible any more. The impossibility for new bhikkhunī ordination is due to disappearance and non-existence of the *Bhikkhunī-saṅgha*. If there is a *Bhikkhunī-saṅgha*, then there is a possibility for bhikkhunī ordination. According to the Vinaya rules, a candidate should obtain ordination from *Bhikkhunī-saṅgha* for the first time and then ordination from *Bhikkhu-saṅgha* for the second time. That means, the candidate should obtain the

ordination from both *saṅghas*. As there is no more *Bhikkhunī-saṅgha* anymore, bhikkhuni ordination is impossible.

At one time, the question about the possibility of the revival of *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* was widely discussed in the midst of *Saṅgha* in Myanmar. Some people might still remember this episode. So also, nowadays the revival of bhikkhunis arises again. From the viewpoint of *Theravāda*, a revival of the *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* could not be possible anymore because it is broken already. In the idea of some people, there was another way to revive *Bhikkhunī-sāsana*. A bhikkhuni-aspirant went to the side of Chinese *Mahāyāna Bhikkhunī* to get bhikkhunī ordination as the first step; they obtained second ordination from the *Theravāda* monks as the second step. So, this form of “hybrid” dual ordination of *Mahāyāna bhikkhunī* and *Theravāda* bhikkhus started in India and the number of bhikkhunis in Sri Lanka is more than hundreds now.

People are trying hard to revive *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* in Thailand. Regarding this matter of the possibility of bhikkhunī ordination, once two Vietnamese *Mahāyāna* bhikkhunis came to ask me. Some people are not satisfied if there is no *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* in the *Theravāda* tradition, that’s why they wish to establish the *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* in *Theravāda* tradition. I explained to them. “People think Myanmar monks do not like *Bhikkhunī-sāsana*, look down on women and try to suppress them. But actually they try to explain according to the Buddhist treatises that such matter is not possible anymore.”

The bhikkhunis ordained by this “hybrid” method *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna* method are not real *Theravāda* bhikkhunī in the viewpoint of *Theravāda*. I explained to those two Vietnamese bhikkhunis, the bhikkhunī rules are very strict and those who can observe them completely are few. There are 227 rules for a bhikkhu while over 300 rules for a bhikkhunī. The rules are more in number and stricter for bhikkhunis so *Bhikkhuni Vinaya* (rules and regulation for bhikkhunī) is very difficult to follow. I explained to them, clothes and appearance is not important, the most important is morality that one should observe.

Morality and Personal Practice

In Myanmar, the equivalent to bhikkhunī is Thilashin, who observe either 8 or 10 precepts without breaking and are respected by people. They learn Dhamma and also practice meditation so this is a very satisfactory thing. Suppose one becomes a bhikkhunī but cannot observe the bhikkhunī rules well, then one becomes a bhikkhunī with many broken rules. This is not a good and proper thing. Actually, the rules are very strict in the olden time, thus those who can observe them strictly are of few. There are 3 robes for a bhikkhu whereas there are 5 robes i.e. 3 normal robes, a cloth to cover chest and a bathing cloth for a bhikkhunī. If a bhikkhunī can observe all bhikkhunī rules properly then it is well and good.

If they cannot observe strictly, they will break many rules and have many *āpattis* (faults). Then becoming a bhikkhunī is

not beneficial for them. That's why I like to emphasize again, the appearance of a bhikkhunī and wearing bhikkhunī clothes is not important, but the most important thing is the morality that they should adhere, practice and observe well. But some people cannot see this point and they feel they must establish a *Bhikkhunī-sāsana*. As I said before, the most important is to improve one's own morality practice, not to emphasize on the outer appearance and clothing. Some managed to understand after I have explained to them.

There is an American Vietnamese nun who wants to wear bhikkhunī robe. As for Myanmar nuns (called as Sayalay), they do not wear bhikkhunī robes, but they wear Sayalay clothes. There are 3 colors, mostly they wear pink color. In International *Theravāda* Buddhist Missionary University, most of the sayalays wear pink colors. She wanted to wear brown color so she came to inquire about the change of color. I explained to her: "The color you wear is not important. People should wear according to their environment. If you wear color unlike others, then it will be strange for others to see. If you follow the example of other sayalays and in harmony with society, then it is no problem."

Then she understood and wore pink color, not wanting to wear brown nun clothes any more since she stayed with Myanmar sayalays who were wearing pink robes. If she would wear brown robes, then from faraway people would not know whether she is a sayalay or a *samanera* (novice). Then her appearance would be confusing for most people.

This is not a small matter. I like to relate this story. A nun was riding in a bus and she was wearing a robe similar to monk color. Sitting next to her was a man who did not see her properly. Later, when a monk came, this man gave his seat to him because he thought two monks could sit together. That man did not notice that the person sitting next to him was a nun, not a monk. He thought she was a monk, so he gave his seat to a monk coming in next. The nun said to that monk “I am a nun, venerable sir!” This situation was awkward to the monk, whether to sit or not. This is a real story which happened in Myanmar and I heard it from someone.

As mentioned earlier, morality is the most essential quality one should have in one’s life. Regardless of being a monk, nun or lay person, one should observe morality to the fullest and perfect it. So, I advised that nun not to be choosy about the color of her nun robes because the exterior form and appearance is not important at all.

Conclusion

Dear audience, I would like to make my conclusion here.

1. The outer appearance and form is of no importance.
2. The inner quality like morality is most important.
3. One should try one’s best to upgrade oneself by upholding one’s morality and also practicing meditation. One should not look down and despise oneself.

Near to *parinibbāna* (final passing away), Bhikkhunī Pajāpatī Gotamī told the Lord Buddha. “In the past, I have

begged for bhikkhunī ordination forcefully and persistently. Please forgive me for this.” Just before her final passing away, she asked forgiveness from the Lord Buddha for her role in requesting Bhikkhunī ordination.

Then, the Lord Buddha said, “There are some people here who have doubts on the achievements of women in terms of Dhamma, whether they could get attainments and psychic power. Show it to them so that they will be free of doubts.” Then she showed her psychic powers to the crowd. This implies that anyone, be it a woman or a man, could achieve attainment and distinction in Dhamma.

As for Bhikkhunī Pajāpatī Gotamī, she carried out the role of a leader to open the path for women to enter into the *sāsana*. After the 8th day of her ordination, she became an arahant and she passed away at the ripe age of 120 years. Her message to her disciples at the day of *parinibbāna* was as follows:

“*Attadīpā tato hotha, satipaṭṭhānagocarā;*

Bhāvetvā sattabojjhaṅge, dukkhassantaṃ karissathā ”

(*apadānapāḷi*, 2.544 (PTS))

1. *Attadīpā tato hotha*: Therefore, be islands unto yourselves.

2. *Satipaṭṭhāna-gocarā*: Please practice *Satipaṭṭhana*, the four foundations of mindfulness i.e. body, feeling, mind and dhamma.

3. *Bhāvetvā sattabojjhaṅge*: Please develop the seven factors of enlightenment.

4. *Dukkhassantaṃ karissatha* : By practicing these (as above), you will make an end to all sufferings.

This was her advice and admonition to her followers and devotees. In conclusion, the most vital task in life is to observe morality and practice meditation. We should keep this essential and practical advice in mind.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

Acknowledgement from the Publisher



Sharing the Dhamma

Firstly, we would like to state our position: we neither support nor oppose the revival of *Theravāda* Bhikkhunī order in *Theravāda* tradition. Our main task is to share Dhamma and we like to offer a chance for the readers to use their own wisdom to reflect on this topic of revival of *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* in *Theravāda* tradition.

Aggācāra Dhamma Project is a non-profit Dhamma group initiated by a group of students from I.T.B.M University. We strive to do *Dhammadāna* to the world because we sincerely believe Dhamma is the best gift among all gifts. Since the Lord Buddha time, *Theravāda* Buddhism has been preserved for a long time in Myanmar and Myanmar is also renowned as a place to learn *Pāli*, *Abhidhamma* and practice meditation. Our main project is to bring Dhamma talks and Dhamma books from Myanmar and translate them

into other languages such as English, Chinese etc. We also publish and distribute books from overseas.

Though our group is very small and started in the year 2013, we strive to do our Dhamma works well. However, if there is any error in the book, please forgive us as humans are prone to errors. Please receive our *mettā* (loving-kindness) and also please give support and encouragement to our meritorious project! We like to express gratitude to those who help in this project and also express our thanks to the ITBMU teachers, ITBMU students and Dhamma friends who have contributed to the printing of this book.

May all rejoice in this *Dhammadāna*!

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

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Tel: (95)-9-421088185, Email: aggacara2013@gmail.com

Website: <http://aggacara.blogspot.com>

**On the 75th Birthday Occasion of
Sayadaw Dr. Nandamālābhivamsa (4th Mac 2015)**



The 1500 copies of this book are the *Dhammadāna* contributed by the teachers and the students from ITBMU and also the students from I.D.E for the fulfilment of their perfections.

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*** Sabbadānaṃ Dhammadānaṃ Jināti ***

Note: Any extra funds will be channelled to the printing of the future English books by Sayadaw. The next book to be printed is The Analytical Study of Paticca-samuppāda with Paṭṭhāna.

The previous English books by Sayadaw which were printed under our Aggācāra

Dhamma Project: 1. The Buddha's Advice to Rahula (2013), 2. An Analytical Study of Vedanā (2014)



There are many viewpoints regarding the controversial topic of revival of *Bhikkhunī* order in *Theravāda* tradition. A few years ago, Sayadaw Dr. Nandamālābhivamsa, the Rector of International *Theravāda* Buddhist Missionary University who is a very knowledgeable senior monk and also well-known for his Dhamma talks that are packed with much valued information, gave a Dhamma talk regarding this topic. In his Dhamma talk, he gave a few reasons to clear out many doubts.

Thus, the publication of this Dhamma talk in book form will enable many people to gain clear knowledge regarding this *Bhikkhunī-sāsana* in the Lord Buddha's time, its background story, various types of bhikkhunī ordination including *Garudhamma*, achievements of bhikkhunis and the duration of *sāsana*. Finally the question regarding revival of Bhikkhunī order in *Theravāda* tradition is discussed widely in this book.